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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 000549

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR S/CT, PM, AF, AF/E, AF/RSA AND DS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [MCAP](#) [DJ](#)

SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM  
FORCE IN DJIBOUTI

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MARGUERITA D. RAGSDALE FOR REASON  
1.4 (A), (B) AND (D)

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Summary  
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1. (S/NF) Pursuant to the goals of the East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative (EACTI), U.S. Embassy Djibouti wishes to use its security assistance (SA) program to establish a national counter terrorism (CT) force within the Djiboutian military. Because of multiple actors within the Djibouti security services, the U.S. Embassy will need to engage the Djiboutian Government (DJG) to designate this unit of focus and set a clear chain of command.

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Current Situation  
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2. (S/NF) Building host nation capacity in the area of counter terrorism is an extremely important component of the EACTI. Djibouti currently is lacking a single national asset that can adequately respond to and mitigate regional terrorist threats. The clear intention of the USG is to fight regional terrorist threats and to build regional stability through the programs of the EACTI. Programmatically, the EACTI assigns the function of CT capacity building in Djibouti to the Terrorist Interdiction Program (TIP) and the Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program (ATA). These programs were funded at \$500K and \$2.3M respectively. TIP and ATA are focused on customs and policing functions. While important and vital to the overall CT effort, TIP and ATA do not allow for the crucial integration of the various governmental security elements that perform CT roles in the Republic of Djibouti.

3. (S/NF) Past discussions with several security organizations in Djibouti have indicated a desire on their part to participate in counter-terrorism training. This is, in part, because of the current national architecture of security operations in Djibouti. That architecture gives several different organizations responsibility for the various national assets within the country. The Djiboutian Gendarmerie, for example, has responsibility for the International Airport and the maritime port perimeter. The Djiboutian Army has responsibility for borders. The Coast Guard has responsibility for approaches to the port. The Republican Guard has responsibility for the Presidency and the Presidential residence. Finally, the National Police have responsibility for security of the port's interior and Djibouti's cities and towns. Yet, past informal attempts to get the Djiboutian security forces to consolidate their counter-terrorism mission into a single force were stiffly rebuffed. Instead the DJG wishes to create such a counter-terrorism task force comprising all the elements listed above.

4. (S/NF) The creation of a task force would help mitigate the current scattered counter terrorism responsibilities of existing organizations. That said, there remain many problems related to the effective accomplishment of any action executed by a force with multiple chains of command and organizational lines. For a task force concept to be successful, a clear chain of command and control must be established at the outset. The counter terrorism task force chain of command need not be a permanent realignment of forces. It need only be an operational chain of command that takes effect in the event the Djiboutian National Command Authority assigns a mission to the counter terrorism task force. The day-to-day functions of operations and training can remain the responsibilities of each security service.

5. (S/NF) Additionally, there are internal political dynamics within the DJG that must be considered. A delicate balance of power exists currently between the various security services within the DJG. Each service tends to act as its own lobby with the President and in some cases each has traditional family and clan ties that remain very important. Giving each service a piece of the counter terrorism pie would serve to preserve this delicate balance.

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The Way Forward  
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16. (S/NF) U.S. Embassy proposes to formally approach the DJG and request establishment of a CT Task Force with a declared chain of command for the employment of it. Once accomplished, a training case will be funded using Foreign Military Financing (FMF) money provided as part of the EACTI. This training case will fund the necessary training modules to make the Djiboutian CG Task Force an effective force.  
RAGSDALE